



## Federal Aviation Administration

December 6, 2005

Dear Colleagues:

I have important information to share about changes in our organization. These changes are part of a concerted effort to address a serious trend that has been building for the past several years: our resources are dwindling at the same time that our workload is expanding. As I've visited our worksites around the country, I've observed time and again the effects this is having on our employees and our ability to meet the growing demand for air traffic services. No one in ATO wants this to continue. Everyone recognizes that there is no quick and easy solution. What I outline in this letter is a decisive step to take charge of our own future.

Early next month, we will begin restructuring the nine service areas we established last year - three each in Terminal, En Route, and Technical Operations - into three ATO service areas: Eastern, Central, and Western. The Eastern Service Area Office will be in the Southern Regional Office in Atlanta, Georgia; the Central Service Area will be in the Southwest Regional Office in Fort Worth, Texas; and the Western Service Area Office will be in the Northwest Mountain Regional Office in Seattle, Washington. At the same time, we are realigning the ATO administrative and staff support functions now located in each of the nine service areas into three shared Service Centers. These centers will be located in the three newly designated service area offices. We are also restructuring the three Flight Services Areas into two geographical areas that will be called Flight Services Information Areas. One will be located in the Alaskan Regional Office at Anchorage and the second in the Central Regional Office in Kansas City. The Anchorage office will service Alaska and the Kansas City office will service the continental United States.

As you read this letter, I'm sure most of you are asking yourselves - is this change really necessary- Will this affect me?

The first answer is "yes". We have to do this. Rising operating costs continue to leave a smaller and smaller share of our limited funds available to invest in people, facilities, and to modernize our aging infrastructure. Meanwhile, the demand for air traffic services is increasing at the same time that tremendous pressure is being placed on the federal budget. If we don't change the way we operate, the ATO will not have the fiscal health to provide the services that our customers need and we won't be able to take care of our employees. It is the next important step in the transition of ATO to the performance-based organization called for by the Congress and our customers.

The second answer is that these changes will mainly affect our ATO employees performing administrative and staff support services; that is, the services we provide to ourselves. They include such duties as budgeting, administration,

airspace, procedures, planning, program management, finance, procurement, staffing, training, quality assurance, and NAS technical evaluation. ATO employees performing these services may be required to relocate with the transfer of their positions to the ATO service area offices located in the Southern, Southwest, or Northwest Mountain regional offices. A small number of engineering services positions will also be transferred. Flight Services positions in the Alaskan and Central Regional Offices will not be affected. The restructuring will begin early in 2006 and be completed within 12 to 18 months; with relocations expected no earlier than June 2006.

I know this is a lot to absorb in one letter, and that I have not begun to answer all of your questions. So beginning today, ATO executives and members of the Transition Team will be visiting each regional office to provide detailed briefings. Additional information will be available on our website ([www.ato.faa.gov](http://www.ato.faa.gov)) beginning Friday at 3:00 p.m. You can also send your questions to us at: [TransitionTeam@faa.gov](mailto:TransitionTeam@faa.gov).

Let me express my appreciation to all of you for the tremendous work you do in keeping our air traffic system operating smoothly, in spite of the significant resource challenges we have. I also want to thank you for your patience as we made our way through the process to reach this point. Through it all, you have kept your focus on what the ATO is all about - the safety and efficiency of the national airspace system.

I ask for your continued support as we begin this critical next phase of restructuring. In the end, it will improve our organizational effectiveness, increase the value of our services, reduce our overall unit costs, and ensure our future viability as the best air traffic system in the world.

Sincerely,

Russ Chew